

PROTEA PULCHRA, A NEW NAME FOR A PROTEA FROM THE SOUTH-WESTERN CAPE

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(With Plate XXX)

ABSTRACT

A species of *Protea* had long been known as *P. pulchella* Andr. This name is preoccupied by the name of an Australian species of *Petrophila* and therefore has to be discarded for the South African species. *P. subpulchella* Stapf. was once considered to be the same as *P. pulchella* Andr. but examination of the type specimen at Kew has indicated that it is different. The name *Protea pulchra* Rycroft is now given to the South African plant.

The name *Protea pulchella* was used by Schrad. et Wendl. in Sert. Hannov. vol. i, pt. ii, 15, t. vii (1796) to describe an Australian plant which is now known as *Petrophila pulchella* R. Br. The specific epithet therefore cannot be applied to the species of *Protea* named by Andrews in 1802 and which occurs in the south-western Cape.

In 1925 Stapf (Curtis Bot. Mag. t. 9057) published an account of *Protea subpulchella* based on a specimen grown in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. Dyer (1943) who was the first to realize that the name *P. pulchella* was invalid and considering that Stapf's species was specifically equal to *P. pulchella* Andr. decided that the name should be *P. subpulchella* Stapf to embrace both, although Stapf stated that "There are three rather indifferent figures of it (*P. pulchella*) in Andrews Botanical Repertorium (tt. 270, 277 and 442). They show some range of variation in the colouring of the flower heads, but hardly any in their size, nor do the herbarium specimens which I have seen warrant the assumption that *P. subpulchella* is merely a reduced state of a plant whose heads measure 9—10 cm. by 5—7.5 cm. It has, in fact, by far the smallest heads of all the species of the *Speciosa* section, to which it undoubtedly belongs".

Stapf's type specimen was examined at Kew. It consists of a few leaves and a detached head which is very different from the commonly known *P. pulchella* Andr. and I agree that it cannot be regarded as the same species (see Plate XXX). It is possibly a "garden form" produced under conditions quite different from those obtaining in the natural habitat of *P. pulchella* Andr., or it might be a hybrid. Its exact origin is not known but Stapf wrote that "it was placed at our disposal by the

courtesy of Professor W. Wright Smith of Edinburgh where it had been received in seed in September, 1919, from Mr. G. L. Smith, a member of the staff of the Cape Town Botanic Garden”.

It was thought that a specimen of *P. subpulchella* Stapf might have been preserved in the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, but investigation proved that no such material had been kept. The species is therefore represented only by the type specimen at Kew unless it is discovered some time in the future, which is unlikely.

Under the circumstances it has been decided that while *P. pulchella* Andr. cannot be upheld on account of preoccupation of the name for an Australian species and because *P. pulchella* Andr. and *P. subpulchella* Stapf are not specifically equal, a new name must be applied to the former. The name now given is *Protea pulchra* Rycroft.

This species was frequently misidentified in the past and was sent to many herbaria under incorrect names. Schlechter, MacOwan, Marloth and Dümmer for example distributed it as “*P. calocephala* Meisn” or “*P. calocephala* R. Br.”, while Drege named some of his specimens “*P. lepidocarpon* R. Br.” and “*P. mellifera* Th.” On the other hand, the name *P. pulchella* was erroneously applied to illustrations of *P. nervifolia* R. Br. in Bot. Reg. t. 20 (1815) and in Reichenb. Fl. Exot. t. 218 (1835). The latter plate is a mirror image copy of the former.

The varieties *undulata* and *albiflora* of Phillips are not upheld. Like many species of *Protea*, *P. pulchra* is variable. Leaf margins may be flat, slightly undulate or decidedly undulate and the colour of the involucre bracts varies from red to pink, green, cream and white.

Most species of *Protea* are to be found in mountainous areas at high altitudes but *P. pulchra* usually grow on the lower slopes and flats. Previously it was recorded from the Cape Peninsula but it now seems to have been exterminated from that area.

SYNONYMY

PROTEA PULCHRA Rycroft nom. nov.

P. pulchella Andr. Bot. Rep. t. 270 (1802); non Schrad. et Wendl. Sert. Hannov. i, ii, 15, t. vii (1796); non Sims Bot. Mag. t. 796 but incl. ref. to R. Br. and Andr. (1805); non Diet. Bollst. Lex. Gart. Bot. 546 (1807); non Bot. Reg. t. 20 (1815); non Reichenb. Fl. Exot. iv, i, t. 218 (1835); Poir. Encl. Meth. Bot. v, 646 (1804); R. Brown in Trans. Linn. Soc. x, 81 (1810); Ait. Hort. Kew ed. II, i, 189 (1810); Kerner Hort. Sempervir. xxx, 352 (1813); Steud. Nomencl. Bot. 660 (1821); Steud. Nomencl. Bot. ed. II, i, 401 (1840); Roem. et Schult. Syst. Veg. iii, 348 (1818); Endl. Mant. Bot. Gen. Plant. Suppl. ii, 77 (1842); Meisn. in DC. Prodr. xiv,



PLATE XXX

Holotype of *Protea subpulchella* Stapf in the Herbarium of the
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

(Photo: H. B. Rycroft)

233 (1856), excl. ref. to Bot. Reg. and Reichenb.; *Sweet Hort. Brit.* 346 excl. ref. to Bot. Reg. t. 20 (1827); *Phill. et Stapf.* in Dyer Fl. Cap. v. i, 567 (1912).

P. pulchella var. **speciosa** Andr. Bot. Rep. t. 442 (1807); Kerner Hort. Semperv. xli, 482 (1818).

P. speciosa var. **rubra** Pers. Syn. Plant. i, 115 (1805).

P. speciosa var. **foliis glabris** Andr. Bot. Rep. t. 442 (1807).

P. speciosa var. **rosea** Wendl. Coll. Plant. iii, i, t. 73 (1819).

P. pulchella var. **undulata** Phill. in Dyer Fl. Cap. v, i, (1912).

P. pulchella var. **albiflora** Phill. in Ann. S. Afr. Mus. ix, iii, 93 (1913)

P. subpulchella Dyer in Fl. Plt. S. Afr. xxiii, t. 920 (1943); Vogts Prot. 57, t. 14 b (1958).

No specimen from which Andrews described the species appears to have been kept and the holotype therefore is the illustration in Andr. Bot. Rep. t. 270 (1802).

DISTRIBUTION

P. pulchra Rycroft.

TULBAGH: Saron, *Schlechter* 7869 "*P. calocephala* Meisn." (B, BOL, G, GRO, K, P, PRE, Z), Wolseley, *Hutchinson* (NBG).

CERES: Ceres, *Meebold* 12396 (M).

WORCESTER: Near Darling Bridge, *Salter* 7303 (BM).

WELLINGTON: Bainskloof, *Grant* 2493 (MO), *Anderson* (NBG).

PAARL: Frenchhoek, *Bolus in herb. Bol.* 8404 (BOL, PRE), *Steer* 945 (PRE), *Taylor* 1514 (NBG), *Paarl*, *Prior* (K, Z).

CAPE: Green Point, *Prior* (K, PRE), Lion's Head, *MacOwan* 2908 "*P. calocephala* R. Br." (K), *MacOwan Herb. Aust. Afr.* 1520 "*P. calocephala* Meisn." (G, K, UPS, Z), *Marloth* 3328 "*P. calocephala* Meisn." (K).

STELLENBOSCH: Helshoogte, *Kies Nat. Herb. PRE* 27143 (K, PRE), near Stellenbosch, *Niven* 56 (holotype of *P. pulchella* Andr. var. *undulata* Phill.) (K), Jonkershoek, *Rycroft* 1952 (NBG), Glen Connor, *Rycroft* 1279 (NBG), Stellenbosch, *Roxburgh* (BM), between Lowry's Pass and Jonkershoek, *Burchell* 8330 (K).

SOMERSET WEST: Helderberg, *Parker* 3674 (NBG).

WITHOUT LOCALITY: *Drege* (BM, CGE, G, G-DC, HAL, K, L, LD, MO, P), *Masson* (BM).